

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5477

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

ZEN AMCONSUL AUCKLAND BY POUCH

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MANILA FOR BIEGING

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

INR FOR OIL/B

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TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F.), MNUC, MARR, PINT, NZ, US

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH LEADER OF THE

- OPPOSITION ROWLING - NEW ZEALAND

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 02163, (B) WELLINGTON 02135,

- (C) WELLINGTON 00181

SUMMARY: THIS TELEGRAM CONTAINS INFORMATION ON SUBJECTS
LIKELY TO BE RAISED BY NZ LABOUR PARTY AND OPPOSITION
LEADER, W. E. ROWLING, IN HIS MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT
MONDALE. PARTICULAR NOTE SHOULD BE MADE OF THE INFOR-
MATION IN PARA 9 CONCERNING THE RECENT DEATH OF ROWLING'S
DAUGHTER. I HOPE I WILL BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THESE
MATTERS IN MORE DETAIL WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT PRIOR
TO HIS MEETING WITH MR. ROWLING, BUT IF NOT POSSIBLE,
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HE SHOULD NEVERTHELESS HAVE THIS INFORMATION. END
SUMMARY.

1. IN REFTEL A, THE EMBASSY TRANSMITTED THE GNZ'S
RESPONSE TO A REVISION OF THE SCHEDULE FOR THE VICE
PRESIDENT'S VISIT AS REQUESTED BY TRIP DIRECTOR BIEGING.
AMONG THE CHANGES IN THE GNZ'S REVISED SCHEDULE IS A

25-MINUTE MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADER W. E. ROWLING (11:35 - 12:00 AM, WEDNESDAY, MAY 10). ROWLING REQUESTED THAT THE ORIGINALLY PLANNED 15-MINUTE PROTOCOL MEETING BE EXTENDED TO PERMIT A SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION AND THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) HAS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S. AGREEMENT TO THAT REQUEST. I SECOND MFA IN SUPPORT OF THE REQUEST AND OFFER THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO ASSIST THE VICE PRESIDENT IN RESPONDING TO SUBJECTS ROWLING IS LIKELY TO RAISE.

2. ROWLING'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY GOING TO BE THE RELATED ISSUES OF VISITS TO NZ BY U.S. NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS (NPW'S) AND THE PROPOSED SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE (SPNWFZ). I ASSUME THAT THE GENERAL BACKGROUND ON THESE ISSUES HAS ALREADY BEEN INCLUDED IN BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT. I NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO DETAIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING THE PERSONAL ROLE THE OPPOSITION LEADER HAS PLAYED ON THESE ISSUES.

3. ALTHOUGH ROWLING CONTINUED TO INSIST IN MID-1975 THAT THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT WAS STUDYING THE NPW ISSUE, BY SEPTEMBER 1975, IT WAS CLEAR THAT ROWLING, WHO WAS THEN PRIME MINISTER, DID NOT INTEND TO LIFT THE BAN ON NPW VISITS IF HIS LABOUR PARTY GOVERNMENT WAS RETURNED
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TO POWER IN THE NOVEMBER 1975 ELECTIONS. LABOUR, HOWEVER, WAS TURNED OUT OF OFFICE AND THE NEW NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY APPROVED NPW VISITS. IN OPPOSITION OVER THE PAST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS, ROWLING AND OTHER MODERATE LABOUR PARTY LEADERS HAVE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE LED BY LEFT-WING ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY INTO A PROGRESSIVELY MORE RIGID STAND ON NPW VISITS.

4. THE PROXIMATE CAUSE OF ROWLING'S REQUEST FOR A SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION APPEARS TO BE A TELEGRAM WHICH HE SENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER IN JANUARY PROTESTING THE VISIT TO AUCKLAND OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE "PINTADO" AND WHAT ROWLING CONSIDERED TO BE UNRESPONSIVE REPLIES ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT SIGNED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE.

5. THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS ROWLING HAS MADE AGAINST NPW VISITS AND IN FAVOR OF THE SPNWFZ ARE:

- A) MANY NEW ZEALANDERS ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO NPW VISITS;

- B) THESE VISITS WERE "UNNECESSARY" FOR OVER A DECADE PREVIOUS TO THE NPW VISITS OF AUGUST AND OCTOBER 1976 AND JANUARY 1978;
- C) THE RESULT OF CONTINUING SUCH VISITS IS TO AROUSE ANTAGONISM WHICH LEADS TO AN UNNECESSARY EROSION OF THE GOODWILL BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES;
- D) A MORE ACCEPTABLE WAY OF STRENGTHENING LINKS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES IS TO ARRANGE VISITS OF CON-

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VENTIONALLY POWERED NAVAL VESSELS;

- E) THE VISIT OF THE "PINTADO" WAS "DELIBERATELY ENCOURAGED" BY PRIME MINISTER MULDOON IN AN ATTEMPT TO DIVERT ATTENTION AWAY FROM NEW ZEALAND'S DESPERATE ECONOMIC SITUATION.
- F) NUCLEAR ARMED AMERICAN WARSHIPS VISITING NEW ZEALAND MAKE THE COUNTRY A TARGET FOR SOVIET MISSILES;
- G) NUCLEAR ARMED AMERICAN WARSHIPS OPERATING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC WILL LEAD TO AN ESCALATION OF COMPETITION BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS;
- H) THE FORMER LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S SPNWFZ PROPOSAL AND ITS BAN ON U.S. NPW VISITS WERE IN NO WAY INCOMPATIBLE WITH NEW ZEALAND'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER ANZUS

AND WERE "EVENHANDED" IN THAT THEY WERE DIRECTED AGAINST NUCLEAR VESSELS OF ALL COUNTRIES.

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6. SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO THESE ARGUMENTS KEYED TO THE SUB PARAGRAPHS ABOVE FOLLOW:

- A) WE ARE WELL AWARE THAT SOME NEW ZEALANDERS ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO NPW VISITS. WE KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT FAR MORE UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR SUCH VISITS AND JUST AS STRONGLY SUPPORT THEM. THEY TELL US (AND WE AGREE) THAT IT IS IN NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL INTEREST THAT THE U.S. SHOULD REMAIN AN ACTIVE FORCE FOR PEACE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AND THAT TO BAN FROM NZ PORTS A GROWING PART OF ITS ALLY'S MOST MODERN NAVAL UNITS IS TO DENY TO NZ THE SECURITY BENEFITS WHICH IT SEEKS. FURTHERMORE, THEY UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF A NEW ZEALAND BAN ON WORLD-WIDE PORT ACCESS FOR U.S. NAVAL UNITS AND DO NOT WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SITUATION WHERE DENIAL OF PORT ACCESS MIGHT JEOPARDIZE OR HINDER WESTERN SECURITY EFFORTS ELSEWHERE.
- B) THE PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THERE WERE NO NPW VISITS BETWEEN 1961 AND 1976 WAS NOT THAT THEY WERE UNNECESSARY, BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE STALLED OVER THE ISSUE OF LIABILITY. THAT ISSUE WAS FINALLY RESOLVED BY U.S. LEGISLATION IN DECEMBER 1974 (P.L. 93-513). THEREAFTER, INACTION BY THE LABOUR PARTY GOVERNMENT ON OUR REQUEST FOR AN NPW VISIT ACCOUNTED FOR THE LACK OF VISITS. IN ADDITION, OVER THESE YEARS THE NECESSITY OF NPW VISITS HAS STEADILY INCREASED AS MORE OF THE COMBATTANT FORCE OF THE US NAVY HAS BECOME NUCLEAR POWERED.
- (THE LACK OF VISITS BETWEEN OCTOBER 1976 AND JANUARY 1978 RESULTED FROM TWO TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHICH WERE WORKED OUT WITH THE GNZ IN THE MEANTIME. THIS, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE REVEALED TO ROWLING AS
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THE RESOLUTION OF THESE ISSUES INVOLVED HIGHLY SENSITIVE SECRET ARRANGEMENTS.)

- C) WE ARE CONVINCED THAT PUBLIC CONCERN IS WANING AS PEOPLE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE BETTER. IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR TO US THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THE TECH-

NICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF EXPLOSION ON A NUCLEAR PROPULSION UNIT AND THE REMOTE POSSIBILITIES OF LEAKAGE OF RADIATION OR RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS. THEY REALIZE, FURTHERMORE, THAT THESE VESSELS OPERATE IN AMERICAN PORTS DAILY AND HAVE DONE SO FOR MANY YEARS WITHOUT ACCIDENT. FINALLY, THEY REALIZE THAT SECURITY IS NOT WITHOUT COST AND ACCEPT THAT NEW ZEALAND HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

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- D) MORE THAN A DOZEN CONVENTIONALLY POWERED U.S. WARSHIPS AND COAST GUARD CUTTERS HAVE VISITED NZ PORTS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. FOR OBVIOUS INTELLIGENCE AND POLITICAL REASONS, WE CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON ANY WARSHIPS.

- E) THE VISIT OF THE "PINTADO" WAS REQUESTED BY THE USG AND APPROVED BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE BASIS OF ITS POLICY ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY 1976.

- F) WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINES, THIS IS UNLIKELY TO BE THE CASE. NO BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE HAS EVER VISITED NEW ZEALAND AND GIVEN THE KIND OF TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGY WHICH CONTROLS THEIR DEPLOYMENT, SUCH A VISIT IS

UNLIKELY. IF A VISIT BY A BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE WAS CONSIDERED NECESSARY, WE WOULD CONSULT ON THE SPECIAL ASPECTS OF SUCH A VISIT WITH THE GNZ.

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- G) THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR ARMED U.S. VESSELS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC IS UNLIKELY TO PROVOKE AN ESCALATION OF COMPETITION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE REGION SINCE THE LEVEL OF U.S. NAVAL OPERATIONS HAS NOT VARIED APPRECIABLY OVER THE YEARS AND THE REGION HAS NOT BEEN A NORMAL AREA OF OPERATION FOR BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINES OR OTHER WARSHIPS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS A THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION.

- H) WHILE THE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO PORTS FOR NPW'S IS NOT SPECIFICALLY DEALT WITH IN THE ANZUS TREATY, IT IS CLEAR THAT, WITH ONE-THIRD OF MAJOR USN COMBAT VESSELS BEING NUCLEAR POWERED, THE ABILITY OF THE U.S. TO MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED IF THESE VESSELS COULD NOT USE NZ PORTS. FURTHERMORE, IN ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL FOR AN SPNWFZ, THE UNITED STATES CANNOT ACCEPT A CONCEPT WHICH APPEARS TO CONTEMPLATE EVENTUAL RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED RIGHTS OF NAVIGATION AND OVERFLIGHT OF MARINE AREAS, ESPECIALLY ONES WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO RESTRICTIONS ON TRANSIT BY U.S. NAVAL VESSELS AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO THE TERRITORIES OF OUR ANZUS ALLIES AND TO U.S. SOVEREIGN TERRITORY WITHIN THE REGION.

7. IN THE EVENING OF THE DAY HE MEETS WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, ROWLING WILL BE DELIVERING THE PRINCIPAL ADDRESS TO THE LABOUR PARTY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE. AMONG THE PLATFORM RESOLUTIONS TO BE PRESENTED TO THAT CONFERENCE IS ONE ENDORSING THE PREVIOUS LABOUR POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH AN SPNWFZ AND CALLING FOR A BAN ON VISITS BY BOTH NUCLEAR-POWERED AND NUCLEAR-ARMED VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT. ANOTHER RESOLUTION BEFORE

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THE CONFERENCE WILL BE ONE CALLING FOR THE LABOR PARTY TO PROPOSE AN EXTENSION OF THE NUCLEAR-FREE PROVISIONS OF THE ANTARCTIC TREATY BY TEN DEGREES OF LATITUDE NORTHWARD EACH YEAR FROM THE PRESENT NORTHERLY TREATY BOUNDARY OF 66 AND ONE-HALF DEGREES SOUTH UNTIL THE WHOLE OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE BECOMES A NUCLEAR

FREE ZONE.

- A FRANK DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE VICE PRESIDENT AND ROWLING MIGHT WELL MODERATE ROWLING'S PERSONAL STANCE TOWARD US AND, HOPEFULLY, CONTRIBUTE TOWARD KEEPING THE PARTISAN PROFILE OF THESE ISSUES IN CHECK DURING NEW ZEALAND'S ELECTION YEAR.

8. ROWLING'S OFFICE HAS INFORMED US THAT HE MAY ALSO WANT TO DISCUSS TRADE IN GENERAL TERMS AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, ACCESS TO THE U.S. MARKET FOR NZ AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. AS SUFFICIENT INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY ALREADY BEEN INCLUDED IN BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT, WE HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO ADD ON TRADE OR MARKET ACCESS.

9. A BIOGRAPHIC NOTE OF SOME IMPORTANCE IS THE DEATH BY SUICIDE OF ROWLING'S 18-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, KIM, ON MARCH 31. ROWLING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED QUITTING POLITICS AFTER HER DEATH, BUT WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY AND THE URGING OF FRIENDS AND PARTY LEADERS, HE DECIDED TO CARRY ON. THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO EXPRESS HIS CONDOLENCES ON KIM'S DEATH. SELDEN

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